

Stay safe and have fun



Tips for staying safe when using your local community



Autism in Surrey

Working to improve the lives of autistic people in Surrey

Travelling alone



Meeting new people



Chatting online



Helpful resources



This booklet has been developed as part of the Surrey Autism Friendly Communities project funded by Surrey County Council.



Young people from ATLAS, one of the Surrey Youth Voice participation groups, helped to develop this booklet in partnership with the team from Autism by Experience.



Autism by Experience
Community Interest Company

Staying safe when travelling



It's important to have a plan for your journey, and a Plan B in case something unexpected happens.

A good Plan B would be to have an alternative option like using a bus if the trains are cancelled.

It helps to work out your Plan B in advance to avoid feeling overwhelmed if there is a problem with your journey. If your journey is a regular journey you can practice your Plan B in advance.

Further tips for safe travelling

- Make sure someone you trust knows where you are going, how you are travelling and roughly what time you expect to be home
- It's a good idea to carry a charged up portable charger with you in case your phone runs out of battery
- You can use an app like Google Maps when travelling on the bus. This will help make sure you're ready for your bus stop - this is really helpful when doing a journey for the first time
- If the bus company has an app it's a good idea to download this to get up-to-date information about bus services and live updates about your journey
- Choose your seat carefully on a bus or a train. Avoid sitting near people who are being loud, or may have been drinking alcohol
- You can always move seats if someone is making you feel uncomfortable. It's important to tell the driver or guard that you feel unsafe
- It's a good idea to have the Uber App on your phone in case you are stranded somewhere unfamiliar. If you are far from home and worried about the cost of the journey, you can ask to be dropped to the nearest large town centre
- If you are feeling very anxious or scared go to the nearest Police Station - the Police will help you



Surrey Police Free Pegasus Card



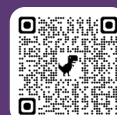
When you apply for a Pegasus Card you tell the Police things like:

- How to support you if you are overwhelmed
- The best ways to communicate with you
- Who they should contact on your behalf

Your Pegasus Card will have a unique PIN number.

When you tell the Police your number they can look at your information on their computer.

**Click here to
find out more**



More travel tips and helpful resources

When travelling, always keep your valuables out of sight, and your bag zipped closed.

- If you carry a bag when you are walking always keep it at the front of your body rather than behind you
- Make sure you always have enough money in your account in case you need to pay for any extra travel
- It's a good idea to have a drink and some snacks with you
- Try to avoid walking in lonely places like alleys, subways and parks, especially if it's dark
- When walking down a road it's best to walk on the side of the road where the cars are coming towards you. This means a car cannot pull up behind you
- When using a taxi or an Uber always sit in the back of the car rather than the front seat, and of course, never accept a lift from a stranger



Surrey is one of the safest places to live in the UK, so we hope these tips will help you to feel more confident about getting out and about and enjoying your community.

Helpful resources

what3words



Has divided the entire world into 3m squares, with each square being given a set of 3 never-changing words.

The 3 words act as an address, meaning that people can navigate to them. It's a good way of letting people know where you are if you're lost.

Click here or use the QR Code to visit the website



Community Safety



The Community Safety pages on Surrey County Council's website have information about how to report crime and anti-social behaviour.

You can also find out about the work of the Surrey Community Safety Team.

Click here or use the QR Code to visit the website



Travelling Safely



Using public transport can be an affordable and enjoyable way to travel, but it can also pose a range of challenges.

This guide contains advice about what to expect and how to prepare, with tips from autistic people.

Click here or use the QR Code to visit the website



Navigating friendships



It's great to meet new people and potentially make new friends, though it's important to keep yourself safe as well.

If anyone you meet makes you feel uncomfortable in any way, tell someone you trust.

Most people are nice, but there are some people who bully and take advantage of others. It can be hard to spot when others are being manipulative, so always talk things through with those you trust.

Categories for friendships

Friendships and relationships can be tricky to navigate as there are so many unwritten rules which can be confusing. It helps to think of relationships in categories.

Aquaintances

- An acquaintance is someone you know, but don't plan to meet up with or chat with a lot - for example a member of a group that you both attend

College / work friend

- This is someone you get on well with, and hang out with at work or college. You don't arrange to meet up at other times. Another example may be an online friend you game with

Friend

- This is someone you get on well with and you make plans to meet up together. You enjoy their company, but don't share very personal feelings with them

Close friend

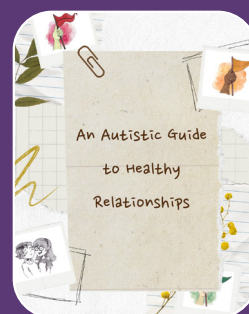
- This is someone who is there for you during difficult times. You both share personal feelings and support each other

These categories are not fixed.

For example, a work friendship can develop into a friendship, and an acquaintance can become a friend.



An Autistic Guide to Healthy Relationships



This guide was developed by autistic people alongside the Centre for Neurodiversity and Development at Durham University.

It aims to help autistic people to recognise the signs of both healthy and unhealthy relationships.

It is free to download and there is also an Easy Read version of the booklet.

It uses red, amber and green flags to describe different behaviours.

Click here to find out more



Staying safe when meeting new people

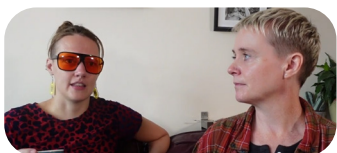
When meeting new people it's best not to share personal details like your address or phone number straight away.

- Be wary of 'pretend friends' - these are people who want to make friends to get something from you, such as borrowing money or always wanting to talk to you about their problems
- Take time to get to know the other person - friendships take time to develop
- Joining a club or group is a good way to meet new people who have similar interests to you
- Be wary of 'peer pressure' - some people may want to do things you are not comfortable with such as drinking lots of alcohol or trying drugs. You can feel pressured to join in, but real friends would never pressure you in this way
- Never leave your drink unattended if you are out in a bar or a pub. If you need to go to the toilet either finish your drink first or ask someone you trust to keep an eye on it for you. Never accept a drink from someone you don't know
- It's okay to block people on your phone and social media if you don't want to get messages from them
- If you are dating online stick to using the app or website to communicate rather than your phone or social media
- If you arrange to meet someone for a date, always meet in a public place and tell someone you trust where you are going. It's sensible to ask them to message you during the date to check you are okay



Helpful resources

Purple Ella



Being autistic and navigating friendships can be hard. In this video Ella chats with her autistic friend Ros about being yourself with friends, maintaining relationships and avoiding being taken advantage of by friends.

Click here or use the QR Code to visit the website



Ask For Angela



Many pubs, bars and clubs have signed up to the Ask For Angela scheme.

Bar staff are trained to know that if you 'Ask For Angela' it means that you are feeling unsafe and need support. They will help you.

Click here or use the QR Code to visit the website



Making Friends



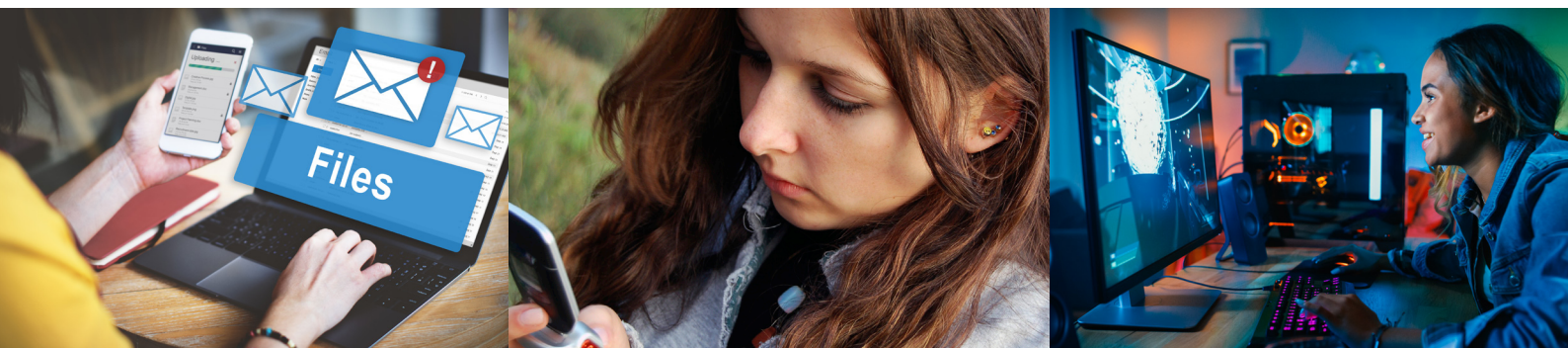
The National Autistic Society have written a guide to making friends for autistic adults.

It talks about social isolation, managing anxieties and tips on how to develop a social life.

Click here or use the QR Code to visit the website



Staying safe online



The internet and social media can be a great way to keep in touch with people you know, but you need to be careful.

It's important to manage the privacy settings on your social media platforms.

The guide written by The National Cyber Security Centre (details on this page) will help you to navigate the privacy settings on a range of social media platforms.

Tips for staying safe online

Using email

- Never open links or attachments from an email address that you don't recognise
- Watch out for 'phishing' emails - these are fraudulent message designed to trick you into revealing sensitive information, such as login details, passwords, or financial details
- Legitimate organisations like banks will never send emails asking you for your security or other personal information

Using websites

- A secure website will have 'https://' at the beginning of the address and a closed padlock symbol in the browser's address bar
- Check the website address. Scammers often create URLs that look similar to legitimate sites but contain subtle misspellings or extra sequences of words

Social Media



- Think carefully about what you post on social media. If you wouldn't say it out loud to a group of friends it's best not to post it on social media. Some things are private and should only be shared with those you trust
- When sharing photos remember these can be shared more widely, so don't share embarrassing or intimate photos

Social Media: how to use it safely



It's important to know how to manage the security and privacy settings on your social media accounts.

Privacy settings can keep your personal information inaccessible to anyone but you.

This guide has been written by The National Cyber Security Centre which is a Government department.

It explains how to use the privacy settings on Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok, and LinkedIn.

It also suggests some tips on how to use social media safely

[Click here to find out more](#)



Staying safe when using social media

If anything you see on social media causes you to worry, tell someone you trust straight away.

- Some people may 'overshare' on social media and it's easy to get caught up in other people's problems. It's okay to unfriend or block people who make you feel uncomfortable
- Think about how much time you want to spend on social media. Some people are on it all the time and you can feel under pressure to comment or reply to them
- It's okay to ignore messages sometimes and perhaps mention to people that you only check messages occasionally. It's okay to take a break from using social media if you are finding it overwhelming
- Never share personal details like your phone number or address on social media / email
- Only accept friend requests from people you know. Not everyone is honest online and some people set up fake profiles they use to 'friend' others and then become threatening and even demand money
- Not everything you see on social media is true. Some people share 'Fake News', so don't believe everything you read or hear
- Cyber-bullying is when people say horrible things on the internet. This is as bad as saying it to your face. It is bullying and abuse and you should report it and block that person
- People tend to post a positive impression of their life on social media. It's important not to compare your life with their 'social media lifestyle'. They will also have anxieties, and times when things are boring or not going well - they just always don't share these things



Helpful resources

Staying secure online



The National Cyber Security Centre has developed a top tips section of their website to help you ensure you are doing all you can to secure you and your family online.

This includes advice on strong passwords and using 2-Step Verification.

Click here or use the QR Code to visit the website



Social Media Apps



UK Safer Internet Centre has developed webpages that give lots of helpful information about using different social media apps.

There is information about Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, WhatsApp and X (Formerly Twitter)

Click here or use the QR Code to visit the website



We hope you find the information in this booklet helpful.

This is version 1a of the booklet published in September 2025.

When this booklet is updated the latest version will always be available to download free from:

www.autismfrienlysurrey.org.uk